

## Ofsted accused of moving goalposts

Chris Henwood

@chris\_henwood

Ofsted has been accused of “moving the goalposts” for colleges following a damning annual report that pointed to a threefold increase in the number of colleges judged inadequate.

Association of Colleges (AoC) chief executive Martin Doel hit out at the education watchdog after its report highlighted how 13 colleges received the lowest possible grading in 2011/12, compared with four the previous year and how, for the second year running, no college achieved an outstanding grade for teaching and learning.

Ofsted further questioned college governance, monitoring of apprenticeships, the “relatively small” growth in the number of apprenticeships among under-19s and said there was a “real danger” that increased subcontracting would dilute quality.

But Mr Doel said that colleges had been doing what government asked of them and questioned the “transparency” of the new inspection regime — brought in from September — and the “relevant experience” of inspectors.

“The annual report no longer represents a state-of-the-nation view of provision, but rather a snapshot of inspections that are now triggered by a risk-based approach. By definition this is skewed towards more negative results,” he said.

But he admitted that, “without doubt”, the report included difficult messages for the sector:

“Every AoC college is committed to doing the best that it can for its students and is committed to achieving continuous improvement,” added Mr Doel.

“Colleges are delivering what government has asked of them and we are interested to discuss how college performance might be better reflected

in a wider basket of measures.

“But if the goalposts are being shifted by Ofsted, we at least need to know the rules of the new game. A fair and transparent inspection regime makes an important contribution to this process.”

He further said that there was too little data in inspection reports to provide this transparency or the information required by colleges, parents, employers and potential students.

“We have further concerns about the relevant experience of some Ofsted inspectors and that the inspections do not give a true reflection of the whole of a college’s provision,” he said.

The wider Ofsted annual report was based on the findings of nearly 25,000 inspections of early years and childcare, schools, colleges and adult learning and skills.

It said that schools were improving, with year-on-year rises in the proportion of those rated good or better.

In the learning and skills sector, 70 colleges were inspected, with 63 adult and community learning providers and 128 independent learning providers.

“Overall, the quality of provision in the learning and skills sector is not improving,” said the report.

“Almost 1.5 million learners are being supported by providers who are not yet good and some colleges have now been satisfactory for over 10 years.”

Chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw called on the government to “shine a spotlight” on the FE sector, branding it a “real concern”.

An Ofsted spokesperson defended the revamped inspection reports, saying they were more “user-friendly,” containing bullet points rather than lengthy pieces of text, declined to comment on the AoC statement.

See page 4



Olympic gold medallist Jessica Ennis standing in front of her mural outside Ennis Hall

## Chesterfield College honours Olympian

See page 12

Monday, December 3, 2012  
www.feweek.co.uk

Doug Richard profile



Page 5

Joy Mercer's Ofsted response



Page 7

Skills at 14 seminar



Pages 8 to 9

inside...

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Top #Ofsted tweets:

 @LeeMarkDavies  
Always argued it was absolutely obscene that any college or provider could be judged outstanding if T&L was NOT outstanding

 @PhilipHastie  
Reading the Ofsted report and can't help but think that some of the information is contradictory/ seemingly incorrect

 @paulcrisp  
They make a valid point but the sector's issues re teaching and learning are a genuine (and persistent) concern

 @louvaine  
"goalposts" weren't shifted - they were removed & replaced with different "jumpers for goalposts" at each inspection!

 @JulianGravatt  
Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw dismisses "so called success rates" today but Ofsted inspectors make critical judgements when rates are low

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# Apprenticeship tax breaks welcomed

Chris Henwood

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Business leaders and union bosses have united behind an "all-or-nothing" review of apprenticeships that has called for workplace tax breaks.

Doug Richard's review of apprenticeships was published on November 27 with proposals for a revamp of the way courses were paid for at its "heart".

The former Dragons' Den investor said he wanted a closer relationship between employers and providers, and called for employers to pay providers directly for apprenticeship training. Tax credits, or other forms of government incentives, should then be dished out to employers as the government paid its part for training.

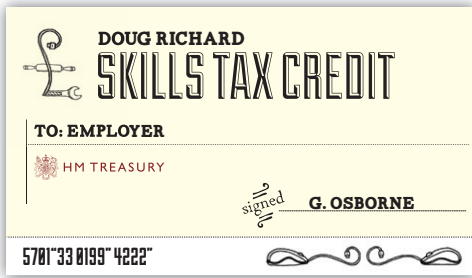
The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the University and College Union (UCU) welcomed the recommendation.

Neil Carberry, the CBI's director for employment and skills policy, said: "It's rightly recognised that we need a simple, accessible funding system, and businesses will welcome the idea of a skills tax credit."

Sally Hunt, UCU's general secretary, said: "We have long called for stronger employer incentives to train and believe the proposal for government funding for apprenticeships to be routed through the National Insurance or tax system would get more employers on board."

However, the Institute for Learning (IfL) and the Association of Colleges (AoC) were more cautious.

Toni Fazaeli, IfL chief executive, said: "Assessors have told us that cash incentives on offer, particularly for small businesses, are not



effective, so we are interested in Mr Richard's recommendation that incentives should be offered through the tax system instead."

Teresa Frith, AoC skills policy manager, said that it was keen that colleges were brought closer to both apprentices and employers. "Our experience suggests that the stronger the direct relationships, the better the experience for all. However, there is little clarity on how this relationship will be managed or formed.

"We believe there may well be some significant challenges for all stakeholders when it comes to implementation, particularly when considering the proposed funding route."

Lynne Sedgmore, executive director of the

157 Group, said that it supported the call for stronger employer involvement.

Mr Richard told FE Week that his proposals were not "a laundry list" from which the government could pick the elements that it wanted.

John Walker, national chair of the Federation of Small Businesses, said it was "particularly pleased" that the review identified the need for a clear definition of an apprenticeship. This would improve the brand image and give a clearer perception of what the apprentice and employer would get.

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, also welcomed the report, but was critical of its "lack of emphasis" on the role that apprentices could play in shaping their curriculum.

Christine Blower, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "For too long apprenticeships have not been valued enough in society. Young people deserve the recognition that this route to employment is worthwhile and just as credible as gaining a degree from a university."

## Richard's recommendations

- Apprenticeships should be redefined
- The focus of apprenticeships should be on outcome
- The government should set up a contest for the best qualification
- The testing and validation process should be independent and genuinely respected by industry
- All apprentices should have achieved level two in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship
- The government should encourage diversity and innovation in delivering apprenticeships
- The government has a role in promoting good quality delivery
- Government funding must create the right incentives for apprenticeship training
- Learners and employers need access to good quality information
- Government must actively boost awareness of the new apprenticeship model

# No new money for funding rate rise

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has told FE Week that despite more than doubling the funding rates for English and maths when delivered in the workplace, they will not automatically increase provider allocations.

This comes after FE Minister Matthew Hancock announced the increase at AoC's annual conference, branding it a "scandal" that many Britons "couldn't read or add up properly".

A spokesperson for the SFA said: "Providers will be funded for all qualifications and programmes through their existing 16-18 Apprenticeship budget and single Adult Skills Budget."

However, providers could renegotiate their 2012/13 allocation as part of the SFA quarterly review process. The spokesperson said: "The Agency will review performance of providers against their maximum contract value, through its published performance management arrangements."

When asked to estimate the cost of the rate increases, the Agency was unable to provide a figure: "The amount paid to providers for the total amount of these qualifications will depend on the choices made by learners and employers and how many enrol on courses covered by these rate changes," said the spokesperson.

The SFA has confirmed that the rate increases range from £152 per qualification, as part of a 24-plus apprenticeship, to a £411 rise per qualification for adults when not delivered within an apprenticeship.

FE Week estimates the rate increase could cost more than £30m for 16-18 apprenticeships, and more than £70m for adults.

Jayne Stigger, head of maths at Bournemouth and Poole College, responded to FE Week's detailed calculations, tweeting: "Agree on the estimate. Question is, will it be cost effective?" A fellow tweeter, FE Funding Guru, posted: "Seems like a reasonable and possibly conservative estimate."

Carol Taylor, director of development and research at NIACE, said as "early and enthusiastic" supporters of the functional skills rate increase, it "welcomed" the news.

"Indeed, for those learners on apprenticeships and work-related courses, raising the rate by more than 100 per cent is very good news for very many learners," she said.

However, with the funding rate increase only applying to workplace learners, she added: "NIACE urges the Minister to consider how we utilise funding to up-skill those learners, often doing something to improve their English and maths for the first time. Those with the poorest skills often need a longer time to achieve and more innovative ways of teaching."



FE Minister Matthew Hancock announcing the rate increase at the AoC annual conference



# ‘Crazy’ early deadline for ILR returns

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

College data staff have reacted angrily to a consultation that will consider if 2012/13 Individual Learner Records (ILR) should be returned seven weeks earlier than planned.

The Information Authority (IA) said there was a “very strong case” for all 2012/13 ILR data, used to ensure public money is spent in line with government targets, to be submitted by September 27.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) needed “timely full year data” for the previous teaching year in October to make its case for funding, the authority said.

But college staff have labelled the move as “outrageous”, “madness” and “crazy” with one saying: “they [BIS] don’t have a clue what goes on in colleges”.

College data specialists conducted an on-line survey on behalf of *FE Week* with 93 per cent of 100 respondents saying they did not agree with the date change.

One said: “We have had significant prob-

lems with certain awarding bodies this year (not all of them) and do so every year. If they can supply achievement data in a timely manner, that’s fine, but I doubt they will do so, given bitter experience.”

Another said that colleges were at their “busiest time” with enrolments and anyone completing ILR data needed to be properly trained or the data would be “shonky”.

“Have the people making this proposal ever been to a college?” he said.

September was when whole college activity “should be focused on ensuring new students received a positive induction”, said another, while one respondent suggested a “staggered approach” for ILR returns.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) reacted cautiously, saying that there was a “risk” that a contracted return time could “lead to more instances of inaccurate data”.

Assistant chief executive Julian Gravatt said: “The ILR contains as many as 300 million pieces of data and is invaluable, yet extremely complicated. It is essential that it is as accurate as possible.

“AoC will attend the board meeting of the Information Authority in December and will

make sure these issues are raised.”

But he added that the consultation lent a “good chance to work out whether colleges can efficiently make earlier returns.

“Colleges often need to take on extra staff in September to cover the workload. It has also been suggested that awarding bodies and government agencies would need to respond more quickly than they already do.”

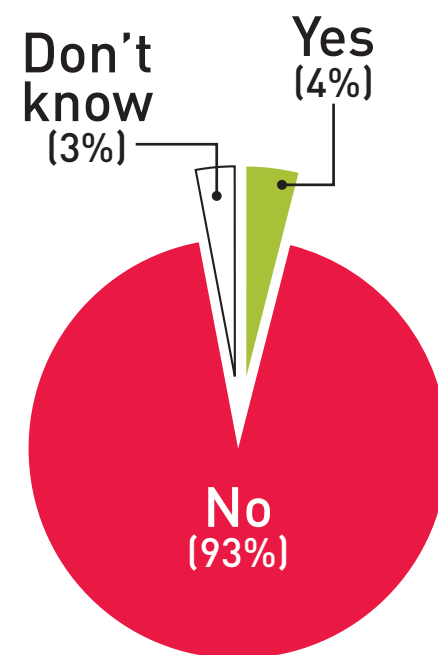
The IA said: “The data will help the department demonstrate the effectiveness of the sector and its value to the economy. Currently, the funding negotiations take place before the final ILR dataset is available.

“We believe it is something that the sector should support, because it will help to secure funding for the sector.

“We want to gather views from the sector on what the main barriers are and what can be done to help enable an earlier collection date.”

IA’s consultation closes today, Monday December 3.

A decision is expected to be made at the IA board meeting on December 12.



Survey results, in answer to the question: Do you agree with the proposal to bring forward the 12/13 ILR return date by 7 weeks?

## Work Programme needs to focus on the right skills

Holly Welham

@HollyWelham

A leading adult learning charity has said a £435 million government programme introduced 18 months ago to get the long-term unemployed back into work has failed to train people in the skills they need to get a job.

The Work Programme has been attacked after official figures revealed that just one in 28 unemployed people referred to the scheme had found a job that continued for six months.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) called for participants to be assessed on entry to the programme and particularly criticised its failure to recognise that some needed to be taught basic English and maths.

David Cameron defended the flagship scheme in Parliament, describing it as “the right programme”.

The Prime Minister said: “It is worth remembering that the Work Programme is dealing with the hardest to-work cases there are in our country. These are people, adults, who have been out of work for over a year and young people who have been out of work for over nine months.”

NIACE chief executive David Hughes said the figures were disappointing. “We know from our own development work around this issue that far too many Work Programme providers are simply not providing the skills’ training needed for clients to make the journey into sustained and secure employment,” he said.

“We know that there are not enough jobs at present. However, that makes it even more important to provide skills training for people now so that they have the skills they, and the economy, will need in the future.

“At the very least there needs to be training for those who lack skills in English and maths, as these can be huge barriers to work. We also believe that there needs to be, for those who have good English and maths skills, sector specific training.”

The charity said inconsistent provision of English, maths and language training between providers was a problem.

“Some prime providers have elected to address English and maths skills’ needs in some parts of the contract package areas, but many haven’t,” said a spokesperson. “Sometimes, even where provision exists in one part of a contract package area, in other parts it does not.”

NIACE added that it was important to hear from Work Programme participants.

In December the organisation will publish a guide for Work Programme providers on how to give more structured skills support and advice on securing Skills Funding Agency cash.

The Association of Colleges said people were being let down by the scheme.

Teresa Frith, AoC skills policy manager, said: “The statistics show that it’s difficult to move people from long-term unemployment into sustainable work. The Department of Work and Pensions decided in 2010 to run the Work Programme with large national contracts, some of which were given to big companies with a limited track record. It may be time for a rethink.”



### Work Readiness with NCFE

These not to be missed 1 day conferences, confront the key issues that affect colleges, training organisations, and their learners. They are free to attend and aimed at senior staff and curriculum planners, providing an update on our ever evolving portfolio of qualifications developed to meet the needs of today’s learners.

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**Nick Linford** - Managing Director of Lsect and FE Week will give a funding and policy update, packing you full of advice.

**Carl Gibson** - Commercial Director at ForSkills Ltd will demonstrate how ForSkills resources can support your delivery of Functional Skills and improve achievement rates. These resources are free when delivering NCFE Functional Skills.

NCFE’s Business Development Managers will outline how NCFE’s qualifications can support the Study Programme and priorities faced by the 16-19 market.

Programme timings:

The event will begin at 11am with 2 breakout sessions (see these below). Lunch is 12-1pm and the afternoon programme will begin at 1pm. We hope to close by 4pm.

**Breakout 1:** NCFE Functional Skills with ForSkills

**Breakout 2:** Work readiness with NCFE - examining employability qualifications and solutions for all ages, including pre 16, 16-19, 19+ and unemployed.

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Editor's comment

Time for positive play

Ofsted's annual report was never going to make for easy reading.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) was among the first FE bodies to field a response.

It accused Ofsted of shifting the goalposts and told of concerns about the quality of inspectors.

My initial thought was that the AoC, on behalf of its member colleges, was being too defensive.

There is no public war of words to be won here — Ofsted may not be perfect, but it does hold all the cards.

However, an excellent AoC comment piece on page 7 presents a considered tone with recognition that “when criticism comes it must be digested, understood and ultimately acted upon”.

This chimes well with responses from other FE bodies, and all colleges should accept the challenge of sharing best practice and striving to do better for learners.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

As far as excuses for errors go, having to produce something in less than half the time it normally takes is better than most.

And so it was for the last edition of *FE Week*, which featured Association of Colleges conference coverage and came out before the event was over.

But to do so, our hard-working editorial team had the luxury of two, rather than five, working days to put out a paper.

And despite the best up-against-it proofing efforts, the following dastardly duo, among others, slipped through.

The bottom of page three headline said “critised” rather than criticised, and the coverage of our own charity auction across pages 14 and 15 wrongly referred to the “Helena Kennedy Fund,” when it should have been Helena Kennedy Foundation.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) with Corrections in the subject line.



Ofsted report misses Exeter's top grade

Chris Henwood  
[@chris\\_henwood](mailto:@chris_henwood)

The principal of a college judged outstanding in March has called for a “more representative picture of the sector” in the light of Ofsted's damning annual report.

The top grading for Richard Atkins' Exeter College — including in teaching and learning — did not figure in the Ofsted report as it was part of a pilot for the new common inspection framework (CIF), introduced in September. The annual report made specific criticism of colleges over teaching and learning.

Mr Atkins said: “I was saddened the annual report was so critical of the college sector and that no college last year was awarded outstanding for teaching and learning in a published report.

“I know Exeter is not alone in providing outstanding teaching and learning, and I do hope that some of those other outstanding colleges are chosen for inspection this year

so that a more representative picture of the sector can be presented next year.”

In other reaction, FE Minister Matthew Hancock said that he was “determined to tackle weak provision in FE”.

“This report rightly highlights the outstanding work of some colleges. But it also, rightly, draws attention to failings,” he said.

Shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg said: “Not enough colleges are doing well enough, and the incentive system needs to improve.”

Chair of the Leadership Exchange and principal of West Nottinghamshire College Asha Khemka said that part of being “an autonomous and mature sector” was recognising that not everything was perfect. “We must take the findings seriously,” she said.

Institute for Learning chief executive Toni Fazaeli said it shared concerns about the lack of providers judged good or outstanding for teaching and learning. Learning and Skills Improvement Service chief executive Rob Wye

welcomed the report. “The areas it highlighted for improvement are areas that we have already prioritised for support: to achieve outstanding teaching and learning, excellent leadership, management and governance, and effective and timely intervention to avoid and resolve cases of failure,” he said.

Penny Lamb, head of policy of development at the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, said that there was much for the sector to reflect on... “local accountability, governance, quality and relevance are issues of prime importance to all providers.”

Marilyn Hawkins, chair of the 157 Group, said: “Where performance has deteriorated, we are as keen as Ofsted to do what we can to ensure it can improve again through a clear focus on teaching and learning.”

Association of School and College Leaders general secretary Brian Lightman said: “Chronic underfunding, and an accountability system that measures and funds colleges according to completion rates rather than quality, is taking its toll.”

Comments

Panel sets out to define FE Guild

I think an important element in bringing employers to the table could be having them represented on the board that makes the decisions.

There has been too much of educators believing that they have 'listened' to the views of employers, but in reality haven't heard what was being said.

Trudi Stevens, director, Green Lantern Training Company Limited, Wiltshire

Why is money being wasted on yet another bureaucratic organisation? Because we have another useless government in power. What actual benefits will the guild deliver? I can't see any. Is this organisation even needed? No,

it is not needed. Let FE be run by colleges, not bureaucrats. We should be spending money on education not bureaucracy.

FE Lecturer

Shadow minister's care blow for FE leaders

Most FE colleges are in the middle of a town or city and don't have room [for assembly and sports access, religious education and secure playgrounds].

Added to that colleges contain many adult students that have not been security checked, including ex-offenders who come to an FE college for a second chance at education.

FE Lecturer

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FE Week profile

# Doug Richard ~ his story

Chris Henwood  
@chris\_henwood

The serial entrepreneur and author of Richard Review of Apprenticeships speaks to FE Week

From humble beginnings a dragon was born.

The entrepreneurial nous of Dragons’ Den investor and government review author Doug Richard wasn’t always present.

Today, aged 54, he runs the School for Startups social enterprise and keeps an eye on new business opportunities with the Cambridge Angels investment group, but the picture of a young Richard, who grew up near New York City, is very different.

“There was nothing about me that was entrepreneurial,” he says. “I worked for other people as I made my way through university, like most people do in the States.

“I had jobs from the time of 17-ish and was fired from most of them. I was not a good employee.

“My first job was supposed to be cleaning up behind the short order cook in a very greasy spoon diner where I grew up in Buffalo, New York.

“I wanted a job but I didn’t want to work, so I would hide in the attic reading science fiction novels whenever they didn’t need me and inevitably, and probably quite properly, I was fired.”

He had more success at the University of California, Berkeley, where he graduated as a psychology major.

Business acumen remained alien, however, as he followed his lifelong passion for boats. “I started delivering yachts for a living, which was a huge amount of fun,” he says. “Then I went to law school, became a lawyer, worked for 30 days and was unbelievably bored.

“I thought I would rather die than work as a lawyer. I quit and there I was — sitting on the street, broke and unemployed. But I wasn’t bored.”

Richard the entrepreneur came out of the shadows when he was in his mid-20s and he set up ITAL Computers with his older brother, Ken — now a senior vice president for Xerox.

“We started selling computers to small businesses because we were broke and we needed to make money,” says Richard, who also has two sisters. Susan is a US federal district judge and Barbara is an economist for the Obama Administration.

“We knew literally nothing about business — you could not have known less — but over five years the business became one of the largest of its type in southern California and then we sold it for a very small amount of money.

“But it was enough to put a down-payment on a house and to start my second business with a friend. It was called Visual Software,

which was my first software company and five years later I sold it for a very tidy sum.”

Richard, who now lives in Cambridge with his wife and three children, concedes that his greatest business lesson came after he became involved with US publicly-listed computer software firm Micrografx, which bought Visual Software from him in 1996.

“They paid me in shares of their corporation, but I had to wait 100 days before I could sell and in that time the price fell 99 per cent and I was wiped out again,” he explains.

“But I held a lot of shares and in an effort to get back I did a hostile reverse takeover and installed myself as the global president and chief executive officer having never run a company of more than 30 people in my life.

“The ensuing four years of trying to turn a massive public company around was, without a doubt, my greatest learning experience. It succeeded and I then sold it. It was real hard-going.”

By 2001, the Richard family was on the move to England, and a period of acclimatisation was on the cards.

“I had finished turning this ugly company around and my wife thought it would be good for our children to have half their childhood in Europe, so I said ‘Why not?’ — I had got my money back and I was up for an adventure, so we moved on a whim basically,” he says.

“I didn’t get involved in anything businesswise for six months. It took me that long to talk to people.”

## “And there I was — sitting on the street, dead broke and unemployed, but I wasn’t bored”

He jokingly adds: “British people are very odd. I had to learn to understand what people were saying, I had to drive on the wrong side of the road and people kept inviting me for coffee or tea when they didn’t really mean it because they’re all falsely polite. It took me forever to get my act together.

“The first few months were a bit of an acclimatisation nightmare and then a friend and I started Cambridge Angels, which introduced me to a lot of the people I came to know.”

And soon there was a call from Dragons’ Den.

“One of the producers was phoning around trying to find entrepreneurs for the show,” he says.

“The angel group we set up had many high-profile entrepreneurs. A number were called and all of them, being very polite and British, said: ‘Oh no, no I couldn’t do that, but I do know this loud American...’ So I got pointed to and that’s how they found me.



Picture by Shane Mann for FE Week

“At the time I thought it was a ridiculous idea and that the show would never happen, and even if it did happen no one would watch it so I figured: ‘Why not?’ I enjoyed it hugely.” He stayed for two series.

With his reputation as an entrepreneur firmly established, in 2008 Richard was asked by the Conservative Party to look at the British government’s support of small businesses.

And this year he was again investigating on official business, this time casting his eye over apprenticeships.

“This is my second government review - it’s a bad habit,” he jokes.

“The first one came about when I was approached by the Shadow Business Minister of the time, Mark Prisk. At the time I thought that sounded kind of interesting, but it was a really challenging because it was commissioned by the party out of power and there were very few resources available to do it. We had to work really hard.

“This one was harder because the system is more complex, but I was afforded many more resources, all the doors were open and everyone in this sector is more open to talk. In that sense it was simpler, but the question was more complex.”

The investigations have come and gone, as have the businesses, but Richard’s one true passion remains, complemented by his work advising new businesses.

“In the real word what I really like to do is sail boats, everything else comes after that,” he says.

“I’ve not got one at the moment. I have them, then I sell them — the second best moment of your life is buying a boat and the best is selling the thing.

“It’s my passion. And School for Startups is the single most fun business activity I’ve ever engaged in.

“I enjoy teaching tremendously and I have no intention of stopping any time soon. I’ll be doing it for a long time.”

### It’s a personal thing

**What’s your favourite book?**  
Anything by Neal Stephenson, Charles Palliser or Susanna Clarke

**What did you want to be when you were younger?**  
Older

**What do you do to switch off from work?**  
Switch off from work? I don’t understand the question — but if I ever had time to switch off I would sail yachts

**If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?**  
I would only invite dead people, then I wouldn’t have to cook

**What would your super power be?**  
To get a hold of Hermione Granger’s time-turner gadget so I could be in more than one place at once and travel back in time



## FE Week Experts

## Independent assessment is key

**Ann Watson on why EAL backs the Richard Review's proposal to use tax breaks to encourage employers to take on apprentices**

Certain issues surrounding apprenticeships are brought up time and again by government, employers, training providers, awarding organisations and apprentices themselves.

The Richard Review is the latest to highlight the benefits of the vocational pathway and the need for rigorous, high quality training equal to a university education.

One of the review's key recommendations is the use of National Insurance or tax breaks to encourage employers, who may not have considered the option, to take on apprentices.

It's an idea that EAL has backed before. Such a policy would especially help small and medium-sized enterprises.

However, all businesses should be encouraged to provide alternative opportunities for young people.

This is especially significant in times of high unemployment, when more graduates are chasing fewer employment opportunities and when the rising cost of university education leaves more graduates with record debt.

Government support through tax incentives would send a strong signal to employers, schools, students and parents that an appren-

ticeship is an equally valuable choice to a degree. As Richard states, it is "inappropriate for it to be viewed as a lower-status alternative".

Apprenticeship numbers are at record levels so we must ensure that quality is maintained.

**"Apprenticeship numbers are at record levels so we must ensure that quality is maintained"**

Using an apprenticeship funding system pegged to the tax system would hopefully help to ensure rigorous, quality training is being funded centrally, thereby protecting and enhancing the apprenticeships brand. Independent assessment is also key.

Awarding organisations such as EAL provide a vital role in the accreditation and recognition of industry qualifications and standards, ensuring apprentices gain awards that employers can rely on.

We have consistently advocated the importance of independent assessment — we are the only specialist awarding organisation to employ full-time technical specialists as external verifiers to support employers and learning providers to uphold standards.

It is innovative approaches such as this that ensure standards are at the heart of every apprenticeship and that employers can trust that their new workers are competent.

Combining high quality training with rigorous independent assessment alongside the right incentives for businesses will lead to greater opportunities for young people to access a highly skilled, fulfilling career.

Employers should be at the heart of this, investing in apprenticeships that they can rely on, but government should also contribute to the cost in a simple, accessible way that does not discourage small and medium sized enterprises from participating.

Apprenticeships are vital for bringing down the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training, as well as meeting skills gaps in sectors such as manufacturing and engineering that are central to economic recovery.

Businesses of all sizes need to be encouraged and helped to participate, and perceptions of apprenticeships need to change among teachers, careers advisers, parents and



young people themselves.

The recommendations made in the Richard Review are a step in this direction.

*Ann Watson is the managing director of EAL (Excellence, Achievement and Learning), the specialist awarding organisation for industry qualifications*

## A period of reflection is now needed

**Apprenticeships, apprenticeships, apprenticeships — after three inquiries, incorporating a host of government recommendations, it's time to take a breather, says David Way**

Doug Richard's report has been eagerly anticipated not least because its advice on the future of apprenticeships comes from the perspective of a businessman without the detailed knowledge or 'baggage' of an insider to the skills system — as the author himself acknowledges.

His independent review was intended to bring fresh insights and to propose some exciting possibilities for the future. It's been generally welcomed, although a formal, considered response will come from government in the spring.

It picks up a number of themes already prevalent within current skills and apprenticeship policy aspirations, and resonates with recent speeches by ministers at conferences by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Association of Colleges (AoC).

These include ensuring employers are always centre stage and that apprenticeship standards are consistently high.

FE Minister Matthew Hancock has made it clear that high quality is as much a priority as growth in numbers. Expectations of apprenticeship quality and minimum duration have been made clearer — and more demanding — in the past year.

The review rightly says that we can go

further to ensure that they demonstrate the degree of rigour that is vital for employer and individual confidence.

For example, we know that overseas experience shows independent end testing drives higher standards.

Mr Richard reminds us that for apprenticeships to help to fuel growth and support the economy, employers must be in the driving seat.

**"There is much in the Richard Review that will stimulate fresh thinking"**

This echoes the important work of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education in employer ownership pilots, and follows Jason Holt's proposals to make apprenticeships more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises.

We are continuing to work closely with Mr Holt, including offering a tailored service to businesses, streamlining the process of taking on apprentices and setting out clear standards for the service that we and apprenticeship training providers will give.

One of the most far-reaching recommendations relates to how we ensure that purchasing power rests more surely with the employer.

While there is much to consider in how this might be implemented, it would potentially help to make more transparent the scale and purpose of the government contribution.

I am always mindful of the message from employers that they want to be clear about future arrangements so that they can be confident in how they engage and invest — a message underlined at the recent CBI conference.

After Holt and the BIS Select Committee inquiry, Richard adds to a significant body of advice to government. We now need a period of reflection and discussion so that employers and apprentices can be confident of the future direction and the support that is available to them.

When Mr Hancock and I attended a recent celebration event for HSBC's graduate apprentices, I was reminded that there is much that is good about apprenticeships, with more and more employers opening up or expanding programmes and with satisfaction levels high.

However, building confidence in apprenticeships and supporting the drive for skills that fuel economic growth means



that we must constantly raise awareness and standards.

There is much in the Richard Review that will stimulate fresh thinking about apprenticeships. I look forward to discussions about how we can achieve real improvements, building on the very best of current apprenticeships.

*David Way is the chief executive of the National Apprenticeship Association*



## FE Week Experts

# The state of play is not always clear

**Ofsted's annual report may make uncomfortable reading for colleges, but counter-balance and context are needed, says Joy Mercer**

Ofsted's annual report can make for uncomfortable reading for those working in and with colleges.

This is not least because the methodology of planning inspections is so heavily weighted by risk.

The report itself says: "The timing of inspection of learning and skills providers, like schools, is determined significantly by risk assessment. Over a third of all the learning and skills providers inspected in 2011/12 were identified on this basis, and this figure was higher for colleges."

While the report is tempered by recognition of the significant pressures that colleges face, plus funding incentives that can lead to behaviours that Ofsted effectively penalises, counter-balance and context is required.

In terms of employment outcomes, Ofsted's Skills for Employability report this year showed that colleges significantly outperformed the government's own Work Programme.

According to Ofsted, colleges successfully

placed 19 per cent of participants in work and as many as 27 per cent from bespoke programmes, where the Work Programme managed a rate of less than 4 per cent in its first year.

Colleges invest a great deal of time and resources helping students who have left school with poor grades in maths and English to improve their marks so that they can go on to further study or start work.

Almost 150,000 16 to 18-year-olds study at pre-GCSE level in colleges, some of whom only just missed the required C grade. Some get their English and maths GCSEs swiftly, but most have to go back to basics and need a lot of help and encouragement to gain their qualifications in incremental stages.

It is a fallacy to imagine that 11 years of under-achievement can be fixed in two years at a college.

Risk assessment and context aside, there can be no doubt that the report poses significant challenges to the sector.

Ofsted is pushing for quicker and more marked improvement, in particular for more progress in teaching and learning, and for the sector to rise to the huge challenge of youth unemployment.

In censuring providers for "not focusing enough on measuring the true impact of provision" and leaders for needing to "focus more on the usefulness of qualifications", the report poses some significant challenges for the FE system as a whole. But colleges are limited in how effectively they can measure impact because they cannot track the progress of alumni beyond a short time span. To do this they need government help.

The implicit criticism of success rates also raises systemic questions — we are interested to discuss how college performance might be better reflected in a wider basket of measures, but as our chief executive Martin Doel said in our response to the report: "If the goalposts are being shifted by Ofsted, we at least need to know the rules of the new game."

Even before those goalposts move, the state of play is not always clear.

We are concerned that the paucity of data in some inspection reports fails to give those colleges the information needed to understand how to improve. Nor will these types of reports best serve the needs of parents, employers, school careers advisers and potential students.

We find it baffling that no college has received overall outstanding for teaching and learning,



and want to understand what the statistical basis is for such judgments. These reports do not allow for this level of analysis.

We have further concerns about the relevant experience of some inspectors and that some inspections do not give a true reflection of the whole of a college's provision.

However, we do recognise that when criticism comes it must be digested, understood and ultimately acted upon.

The challenge for colleges, Ofsted and ourselves is how to use inspection to best serve the needs of students and the communities in which they live.

*Joy Mercer is the Association of College's policy director*

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## FE Week event

# How to get 14-year-olds on the right track

Eleanor Radford

@eleanorradford

Meaningful careers advice and support would help 14-year-olds plan their futures, teenagers told a parliamentary panel.

Four members of Downside Fisher Youth Club in London spoke about their experiences in education at a seminar for the Associate Parliamentary Skills Employment Group's (APSEG) cross-party manifesto for Learning, Skills and Employment.

The event, held at the House of Commons, was part one of Skills: A Life, a series of four discussion panels looking into the skills and employment issues facing those aged 14, 23, 35 and 50. APSEG said it recognised problems and changes in the workplace such as high youth unemployment, the volume of different career paths taken in a lifetime as well as the image of FE.

Speakers included *FE Week* editor Nick Linford, Graham Allen MP and Professor Ann Hodgson of the Institute of Education. Guests were invited from organisations such as City & Guilds, 157 Group, Skills for Justice, Learning and Skills Improvement Service, Policy Connect and Ofsted.

Sixteen-year-old TJ Anderson, one of the teenagers to address the panel, called for more one-to-one support for school pupils.

"When I was 14 I wanted to become an actor," he told the group. "I was doing drama for a couple of years but I didn't really get enough support so I dropped out. When I got to college I was pleased — I was there because I chose to go. I then decided to become a gym instructor and got lots of support."

"If I'd had support when I was younger I think I might have become a different person with different aspirations."



From left: Jewel Barnes and TJ Anderson, both of Downside Fisher Youth Club, Ann Hodgson, Institute of Education, Nick Linford of *FE Week*, Nic Dakin MP, Christopher Monaf and Nathaniel Danderson, also of Downside Fisher Youth Club

He said if he could do things his way he would make sure that Year 9 pupils had monthly one-to-one meetings with school staff so that they had the chance to obtain "personal advice, full details and support." "Fourteen-year-olds could then plan the next steps they took," he said.

Professor Hodgson said school pupils should be given "meaningful careers guidance, information and guidance constantly" throughout the 14 to 16 stage and that young people should be given more opportunity to get out of the classroom to experience the real working world.

TJ said: "I think that would make a difference. In Year 8 you're young and can get excited about going to places and your aspirations are high."

David Harbourne, director of policy at Edge, said that pupils needed more exposure to FE colleges.

"People should take children to FE colleges in Year 8. Many have never heard of most jobs; all they know is what they see on television and on the high street. It would help to change the way they think about what to do for GCSE," he said.

TJ added that it helped when big businesses came and told pupils of the opportunities available to them. "Barclays came in and spoke to us about jobs, which was great. It's good for big companies to come in and give us hope," he said.

Meanwhile Rona Macdonald of Opito, the Oil & Gas Academy, said schools should push more "soft skills", a suggestion that followed a meeting with a group of teenagers. "They were fidgeting, hardly any of them could hold eye contact with me and they were getting their parents to speak for them," she said.

Mr Linford, of *FE Week*, highlighted the benefits of obtaining evidence "destina-

tion data" showing what jobs people gained through what routes.

"In 2009 I wrote about how FE has become obsessed with qualifications and success rates at the expense of evidencing positive progressions, such as gaining employment and moving on to higher levels of study," he said.

"The situation in 2012 remains unchanged, which means it is hard to shout about the real difference vocational education can make to young people and adults."

"It's critical that we resolve this information gap, to help promote FE to school children, as well as our paymasters, in the form of the Treasury."

The next Skills: A Life session will concentrate on 23-year-olds, focusing on the changing youth labour market, alternatives to university after the rise in higher education fees as well as the role of welfare.



The seminar took place in Committee room 17 in the House of Commons

Pictures by Shane Mann





From left: Barry Sheerman, MP and David Ward, MP



Graham Allen MP



Professor Ann Hodgson, Institute of Education



TJ Anderson, 16, from Downside Fisher Youth Club



Karen Adriaanse, HMI, Ofsted



Nick Linford, *FE Week* editor

# Free lunches for learners is ‘no brainer’



By not offering all eligible college students free meals the government is “piling disadvantage upon disadvantage”, says Nic Dakin MP.

The member of the Education Select Committee, who is spearheading a cam-

paign, No Free Lunch? led by the Association of Colleges (AoC), introduced a Ten Minute Rule Bill in Parliament calling on the government to extend the provision of free meals to qualifying students who attend sixth-form and FE colleges.

He told *FE Week* that it was a “no brainer” that 16 to 18-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds should get free lunchtime food. “More people from deprived backgrounds go on to vocational courses at FE and sixth-form colleges — 13.3 per cent compared with 8.3 per cent at school sixth forms,” he said speaking from the House of Commons where he was chairing a panel about choices for 14-year-olds.

“Yet they are not the ones allowed access to free school meals. It’s piling disadvantage upon disadvantage.

“I think every person, wherever they go, should be entitled to free meals if they meet the need.”

He said it was “absurd” how at Hack-

ney University Technical College eligible students didn’t get free meals whereas those at Hackney Community College did — and they were both on the same site.

“I think every person wherever they go, if they meet the need, should be entitled to free meals”

He added: “The age of participation in education is going up so why should those beyond 16 not be entitled?”

As a former principal, he said it was “absolutely crucial” for students to eat properly.

“Missing meals has a detrimental effect on performance. You’re more likely to miss classes, be inattentive and more likely to fail,” he said.

Mr Dakin said that David Laws, the Minister of State for Schools, had described the situation as an “anomaly” and that the government was looking at ways to address the situation.

After the MP introduced his Ten Minute Bill to Parliament he said he received “massive support” across the parties.

“Members from all sides came up to me — Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, Greens, Labour supporters and a Northern Irish MP,” he said.

“Many of them have now signed up to AoC’s petition.”

So far more than 5,600 had signed up a government e-petition.

To sign up to AoCs No Free Lunch? petition see [www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk) or see [epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/31069](http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/31069).



# FE Week campus round-up

## Students hear top tips from fashion veteran



From left: students Theo Fader, 17, Gabriela Himus-Riha, 16, Ethan Houston, 17, designer Simon Carter, lecturer Roopi Harrison, and students Elizabeth Adelusi, 17, Miles Berry, 18 and Aprille Byefield, 17

Fashion designer Simon Carter dropped in on Kingston College students to give advice on how to get creations from the classroom into stores on the high street.

The menswear and accessories designer, who has shops across the UK, told students how he first created his brand 27 years ago.

“One of my earliest defining moments took place when I was trying to get my accessories into Next,” he said. “The buyer said she would come to my showroom. I cleared my kitchen table, laid out my stock

and invited her to view — in my flat, as I did not have a showroom in my early days. One hour later she had placed an order for £27,000; you can imagine my astonishment and excitement.”

Media student Josef Cisneros, 19, said: “I loved the way Simon showed us his products and got us all involved. It was useful to hear how he started on a small scale and built his way up. Simon also talked about other designers such as Paul Smith and how his influence informs the entire industry.”

## Cooking up a storm in FutureChef 2013



From left: FutureChef competitors Rhianna Catt, 15, and Lauren Sinfield, 14

Two aspiring chefs will showcase their cooking skills at the regional final of Springboard’s FutureChef 2013 competition after victory in their local heat at Central Sussex College’s Crawley campus.

Lauren Sinfield, 14, from Lancing, and Rhianna Catt, 15, from Brighton, both wowed judges with their culinary creations. Lauren, a pupil at Sir Robert Woodward Academy, prepared salmon fillet in a white wine sauce with rice and courgettes, followed by a passion fruit soufflé served with raspberry coulis. Meanwhile, Rhianna, from Dorothy Stringer High School, served pigeon breast with a potato

rosti, mushrooms and a balsamic jelly, followed by a cherry chocolate fondant and clotted cream.

Head judge Francis Estephane, chef lecturer at the college, said: “Both Lauren and Rhianna put in outstanding performances. Their menus were exceptional.”

“I’m still quite surprised,” said Lauren. “I love cooking at home and would like to be a chef in the future.”

Rhianna said: “For me, cooking is a real passion. The pressure of expectation made things quite tough today and so I was really pleased when the judges announced the result.”



Student Harry Fox, 18, prepares to chomp a pig’s eyeball

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## I’m a student. . . get me out of here

Students ate a pig’s head, devoured an octopus and handled a tarantula when Canterbury College held a series of I’m A Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here-style challenges to raise more than £1,000 for Children In Need.

Eleven brave students tried weird and wonderful dishes cooked by the catering department, including pig’s tongue, frogs’ legs, lumpfish roe and Bourgogne snails.

A crowd of nearly 200 students gathered to see if the contestants could stomach all nine courses. All but two finished — although none came back for seconds.

But students’ union president Harry Fox, 18, was up for more. After the last course he volunteered to eat a pig’s eyeball for more money. The crowd handed over the cash — and Harry took several minutes to swallow the delicacy.

Catering tutor Fodos Skordi prepared the dishes. “The students may have found it disgusting but in other countries what we served is gourmet food,” he said.

Seven staff and students then handled some of the animal care department’s creepiest critters for another challenge.

They plunged their hands into a tank of meal worms, held hissing cockroaches, got up close and personal with a palm snake, and let a Chilean tarantula crawl over them.

## Students’ work crashing on to screens with new road safety awareness drama



Photojournalists from Sheffield College were involved in the Crash filming in Sheffield. From left: Tom Maddick, Adam Partoon, Peter Willetts & Batseba Tesfaye

Sheffield College photojournalists helped with the filming of a new drama that highlights the dangers young people can face on the roads.

“Crash,” which shows a serious accident and how the three emergency services respond, is due to be screened in South Yorkshire schools early next year.

Students on the press photography and photojournalism course helped the film crew on location earlier this term.

Tom Maddick, 26, said: “I had the chance to take some good photos of actors and trainee surgeons in an intensive care unit mocked

up at Sheffield Hallam University and I lent the crew some of my lenses for filming. The two days on set also gave me the chance to capture a number of images for my portfolio.”

Diane Malpass, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue group manager, said: “Some of the material in the film will be shocking but is designed to have a strong impact on the youngsters to bring home the consequences of careless or reckless driving.” Nationally, road accidents are the biggest killer of young people aged 17 to 24. The film’s main message is that they could often be avoided by simple changes in behaviour.

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## New live room is ‘investment in the future’



Student Barry Hames, 20, rocking out in the new live room at MidKent College

Chart-toppers of the future will receive a head start at MidKent College with a new soundproofed live room.

The facility will give music students the opportunity to practise in private while their music technology counterparts can use the latest high-tech equipment to ensure the quality of performances shines through.

Sevenoaks musician and former college lecturer Dan Clews, who performed alongside Tim Minchin during Children in Need, officially opened the room during Colleges Week.

“The UK is the second largest music exporter in the world behind America; it’s important we

continue to invest in the future of the industry,” he said.

“I came across some talented musicians during my time at the college and it’s great they now have a room of exceptional quality to practise that talent in.”

Louise Molton, head of the creative and visual arts faculty, said: “This room gives the musicians their own self-contained area to perform in, and will really help to raise their performance levels.

“But it’s not just music students who will benefit. Our performing arts students can also use the room, and our creative media students can film the various events that go on here.”



From left: Corey Haikney, 19, Tyne Met college, Scott Foster, 19, Sunderland College, and Ryan Thompson, 16, Tyne Met College

## College gives all students a sporting chance

Colleges from across the North East were on to a winner when Sunderland College organised a five-a-side football tournament for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

A group of student volunteers organised the contest as part of a Together Activity Group (TAG) scheme.

Project coordinator Rachael Smales said the tournament had been a huge success. “Many of the students taking part have not got involved in organised sporting activities before,” she said.

“They all really enjoyed the experience and it is great the other colleges from across the region are willing to get involved.”

She said that Sunderland aimed to give students the best college experience possible, “no matter what their interests or attainment level”.

The student volunteers have also organised Zumba classes, breakfast clubs and gym sessions. Former student Konnor McCully is a TAG project volunteer who became involved through Durham FA’s Football Foundation Programme. “The whole day has been fantastic, it could not have gone better,” he said.

“I love volunteering with the TAG Project; it is fun, exciting, and great teaching the students skills within football. I have learnt a lot too.”

Tyne Met College won the tournament final, beating Sunderland College 3-1.



Student Abi Davies, 16, has a go at creating art with the famous spread

## Marmite artist spreads some inspiration

You either love it or you hate it. Former Coleg Gwent student and artist Nathan Wyburn loves it – and so he should. The 23-year-old is best known for his portrait work produced by spreading Marmite on toast...

Nathan recently visited current students at the college’s Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone to teach them about using alternatives to paint, such as sugar, chocolate or ketchup.

Inspired by everyday objects that most people take for granted, Nathan has also used snow, pen lids, soil, newspaper cut-outs and candles to produce his art. He also films the process and broadcasts the time-lapse videos on his YouTube channel.

Nathan showed A level and BTEC art students a variety of his work commissioned for big name brands such as Marmite, BIC,

Costa and Hovis, as well as for charity projects.

“Coleg Gwent have always been really supportive of my work, so it’s great to speak to art students here. Hopefully it’ll inspire them to try new things,” he said.

Motivated by Nathan’s radical approach, students experimented with toast and marmite to produce an impressive mosaic of British singer songwriter Tulisa Contostavlos.

Nathan Morgan, 20 from Tredegar, said: “It’s brilliant to learn from someone successful, but also approachable and friendly. Nathan’s from our local area so we can really relate to him.”

The session was part of students’ enrichment programme, which provides extra opportunities for students to improve their skill and experience.

## Business Busters offer advice to companies



Front row, from left: sixth-formers Zoe Dean, Charlotte Yardley, Jay Tattersall and Adam Smith. Back row, from left: sixth-formers Hannah Gowling, Junaid Iqbal, Jack Bower and Ehsan Hussain

Students at a Teesside college have made a film to stop companies starting out from making costly mistakes.

Ten Prior Pursglove College students wrote, filmed and starred in Business Busters, with help from writer and director Laura Degnan and support from the Redcar and Cleveland Enterprise Team.

The film features a city girl who is given the chance to follow her dream and run a cake shop. She stumbles across problem after problem until the Business Busters swoop in to help her find solutions.

Laura, a director at Writers’ Block, a North East company that runs writing, drama and

film-making workshops, worked with the students for several weeks.

Student Zoe Dean, 19, from Brotton, said: “We’ve all had the chance to take part, by either directing, starring or writing. We hope it will be helpful for anyone who is starting their own business or expanding current enterprises.”

The film was unveiled to an invited audience, including local MPs, at a red carpet premiere at the Guisborough college.

Laura said: “The students were able to learn not just from me but from one another. They developed some really creative and extremely funny ideas and delivered them in a very visual way.”



# FE Week campus round-up

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## Chef wants ‘seafood coast’ put on the map



Mitch Tonks: “I’ve long been a believer that the south west has the best seafood in the world”

A food writer and chef has helped to set up a seafood academy at a college on the south coast. The Mitch Tonks Seafood Academy has been opened to inspire young chefs to put South Devon on the map for seafood excellence. “I’ve long been a believer that the South West has the best seafood in the world and this academy will really develop the potential of young chefs to help them to become some of the best seafood chefs in the country,”

said Mr Tonks, who owns three restaurants, one of which won this year’s Best Seafood Restaurant. “One of my own goals for my businesses is to promote the whole area as Britain’s seafood coast — an area where people from all over world will travel to enjoy it’s famed seafood. “One of the challenges with this, and one we all face within the restaurant industry, is a skill shortage of properly trained staff, especially of chefs that have a good understanding of seafood.”

## Fundraiser was icing on the cake



From left, Georgia Petrou, from Sunbury Manor School with college catering student Laura Bamford, both 16

Cupcakes were at the centre of Colleges Week celebrations at Richmond upon Thames College. Visitors who made it to the catering department during an open evening were encouraged to roll up their sleeves and practise their icing and decorating skills — with the promise of a tasty treat at the end. Pre-decorated cupcakes were sold to raise money for Children in Need. “It was great fun learning how to pipe the icing, and I was really pleased with the result as it looked and tasted delicious,” said Georgia

Petrou, 16, from Sunbury Manor School. Richmond’s catering department is home to Merits, a training restaurant where students gain the skills to become the chefs and food service staff of the future. Helping at the Colleges Week event were students Laura Bamford, Rosie Buckle, Ben Harris, Marion Kamau Njoki and Scott Tuckwell. “It was fun being the teacher instead of the student,” Laura said. “And the cupcakes decorated by the guests looked brilliant. They were really enthusiastic and it was nice to show off some of the skills that we’ve been taught.”

## Sports hall renamed to honour Olympian

A sports hall at Chesterfield College has been renamed to honour Olympic gold medallist Jessica Ennis. The heptathlete, who visited the college for the first time this month to open its new “heart space”, library, and guidance centre, said that she felt “very special”. The college’s performing arts students gave a concert before Jessica took part in a question and answer session. She then toured the new building that will provide students with a space to study, eat, socialise and receive advice on their studies and career path. Then it was a case of seeing double at the renamed sports hall when former art student Pete Barber of Urban Canvas presented his mural of Jessica for the hall corridor (see picture). She ended her visit with sports staff and students who were holding athletics sessions with local primary pupils. Jessica said she was impressed by the new building — “it looks really bright and modern. It’s nice to see what they’ve done, it looks amazing.” Principal Trevor Clay said students would now have a bright, modern, informal space in which they could study and socialise. “It feels like the heart of the college, hence its name ‘heart space’. Everyone is delighted that Jessica was able to launch the facility for us.”



Olympic gold medallist Jessica Ennis

## BBC Dragons’ Den star inspires students



Students Jack Tibbatts, and Jack Cunningham, both 18

Staff and students at Warwickshire College had a hectic “entrepreneurial week”. It all kicked off when Julie Meyer, the founder of Ariadne Capital and a Dragon in the BBC’s online Dragons’ Den, visited the college’s Rugby centre. She talked to students before receiving business pitches from two groups from the college’s Peter Jones Enterprise Academy. In her speech she stressed that the new world of venture capitalism was not about who had the money, but about entrepreneurs and ideas. Student Lucy Ward, 17, said: “I thought it was really inspirational. I learned about how she planned as she went along and not be in the mindset of making money, just to do everything step-by-step.” Other areas of the college also took on the enterprise spirit with great enthusiasm. Construction students won a bid to refurbish old sash windows at Moreton Morrell, motor maintenance students offered winter car checks and valeting services, and art students raised nearly £1,000 at an arts bazaar. There was also the opportunity for students to get information on business start-up loans, get involved in workshops on setting up businesses, and take part in networking events.

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# Hampshire students trek out of their comfort zones

Trekking in the Himalayas, riding on elephants and visiting Buddhist temples were all part of an adventure of a lifetime for a group of Hampshire students.

Alton College students spent a year working and fundraising to save £2,000 each for a 10-day trip to Nepal in October.

Among the 31 students who flew to Asia was Daisy Van der Lande, 17, from Selborne.

“I had such an amazing time,” she said. “Going to Nepal taught me that it’s really important to get stuck in and learn about another culture. There are so many different ways of life out there, and sometimes it takes being somewhere completely different that takes you out of your comfort zone to make you stop and appreciate what’s around you. I never did that before at home.”

The adventure has given Daisy a thirst for travel and after finishing her A-levels she plans to take a gap year to explore South America, before studying English literature and history of art at university.

The trip was organised with travel company True Adventure, but the students planned what they were going to do, and booked transport and accommodation.

Daisy’s favourite part of the trip was trekking in the Himalayas. “The scenery is incredible — television doesn’t do it justice at all,” she said. “You feel so small in comparison to these mountains, they’re ridiculously big, there’s no feeling like it. You’ll be looking at one that’s the other side of the valley and you’ll be thinking, oh, that’s a tiny little hill,



Daisy Van der Lande (6 from right, pink scarf), 17 with Alton College staff and students and Mike Barrett from True Adventure (far right)

but actually it’s 5km above you. It’s quite humbling.

“We stayed in tea houses, which are like B&Bs, just four walls and a tin roof. They’re run by families, and we got to know the owners and played with the children. It was very one-to-one and personal, which was lovely.”

One of the hardest parts of the trek said Daisy was when two students became very ill with food poisoning.

“That hit us on the evening of the second day of the trek,” she said.

“The next day we had a really hard day, and half way through the whole team got together and worked out how we could get these people up the mountain. We carried their bags, and

each of them had someone stood behind pushing them up, and another person in front pulling them forward. We got them to the top and it was freezing. That evening over dinner we had a heart to heart and everyone just broke down.”

“Then we had to decide whether to go on to Poon Hill. The leaders had decided the two people were too ill to go on, so we had to decide whether to carry on without them, or cut the trek short and miss the sunset on Poon Hill, which apparently is one of the most amazing sun sets you can ever see in the world.

“It was possibly the hardest decision that any of us had ever had to make, because you have to decide whether you want to

stay as a team, or see this incredible sight. We decided to go down. It was definitely the right decision.”

Art and design lecturer Ivan Bicknell joined the students on the trip. “Out of everything I do at the college, it’s the thing where I see the learning taking place more than anywhere else,” he said.

“The life skills they learn goes way beyond what you can ever do in a classroom. It’s fantastic; they grow so much and change a lot. It teaches them about taking on responsibility, leadership, working as a team and supporting each other.

“It gives them a lot of confidence. They will reap the rewards.”



Performing arts students from West Nottingham College, in costume for their sold out comedy show

## Having a laugh raising money for charity

Staff and students at West Nottinghamshire College dug deep in their pockets for Children in Need.

Top of the bill was comedy improvisation from performing arts students in the 150-seat Create Theatre at the Derby Road campus. The theatre was sold out for two nights as the students raised a laugh — and some cash (the students’ union was determined to raise more than £2,000, beating last year’s total of £1,655).

Student Daniel Salmon said: “To put a skill we learn in college into something fantastic like raising money for Children in Need is terrific. It makes you feel amazing.”

Molly Murdoch said: “It wasn’t easy — it was

quite tricky to get it all prepared in time and get everyone together, but I think we pulled it out of the bag.”

Tutor Andy Dobb said: “The students really impressed us with how quickly and creatively they responded to the union request to put on a comedy show for this good cause. They should be very proud.”

Other activities to bring in the pennies included visits to other college campuses by Pudsey Bear, Children in Need’s mascot, and the college’s Butterflies day nursery staff donning their pyjamas. Students also sold Pudsey merchandise and cakes and organised a quiz, as well as a prize tombola and bingo game.

## Footballers tackle men’s health issues



Front row, from left: Middlesbrough captain Rhys Williams, Boro striker Curtis Main, and college commercial catering manager Alister Wrigley. Back row, from left, college deputy director of construction Steve Ankers and project manager Tom Metcalfe

November becomes Movember for many men as they valiantly grow moustaches to raise money for charity. Staff at Middlesbrough College got in on the action — with support from two Middlesbrough Football Club players who helped to raise awareness of men’s health, including prostate and testicular cancers.

No subject was too tough to tackle for players Rhys Williams and Curtis Main.

Changing room banter, team talks, the size of the crowd and away fans’ chants were just some of the subjects covered during a question and answer session.

“I’ve known a few Aussie footballers who’ve had scares relating to testicular cancer, and I’d

tell anyone to get themselves to the doctor when they first suspect something might be wrong,” said Rhys, 24.

Middlesbrough College FC coach and former Boro player Neil Maddison also pitched in at the event, with comedian John Ryan.

The get-together featured moustaches of every shape and size, including impressive facial adornments sported by Tom Metcalfe, college project manager, Alister Wrigley, commercial catering manager, and Steve Ankers, deputy director of construction — all members of the college’s “Mo Bros”, a group who started November clean-shaven but who have groomed their facial hair for the past month.



## Curriculum Manager - Engineering

VC 465 (£32,317 - £38,572) Full Time



We need an outstanding manager capable of helping us to transition our Engineering Department to meet the needs of Island, and national employers effectively, and help our students develop the critical Engineering skills required to progress to long and successful careers in this critical industry.

We need someone who is:

- Highly committed to learners and their success
- Committed to the industry and its future
- An innovative and inspirational manager
- Capable of driving change
- Able to achieve challenging targets in a very dynamic environment

The successful applicant will hold Level 2 (A-C GCSE grades equivalent) in Literacy and Numeracy, a degree or professional equivalent and a teaching qualification.

Closing date for applications: 12 Noon, Thursday 6 December 2012

For an application pack please email [recruitment@iwcollege.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@iwcollege.ac.uk) quoting vacancy code VC 465.

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## Engineers and Computing Professionals

Are you highly motivated, inspirational and enjoy working in an outstanding environment?



Do you want to share your knowledge and skills with the next generation?



## DRIVING AMBITION INSPIRING SUCCESS

Middlesbrough College engages over 12,000 students each year in the widest range of subject areas and as such is the largest provider of Further Education in the Tees Valley. The College is in good financial health, officially good with outstanding features according to Ofsted and continues to grow its student numbers each year as our reputation for excellent results and outstanding student support extends across the Tees Valley. To further develop and build on our success the College is seeking to recruit experienced and qualified staff to join the Engineering and Computing Department.



This is a fantastic opportunity for Engineering and Computing Professionals to develop their career within a leading educational institution. The Engineering and Computing is a cross disciplinary department that delivers training and education in a wide range of Engineering disciplines. The Department is seeking to appoint a number of Lecturers in Engineering and Computing who will be able to support teaching across areas of mechanical engineering, process, instrumentation, manufacturing, operations and maintenance, product design and computing. If you have a background in these industries and would like to work in the educational sector this is a superb opportunity to work for a forward looking College, and share your knowledge and skills with the next generation of professionals.

As a Lecturer you will be responsible for managing the learning process, guiding and supporting students, preparing teaching materials and assessing students' work. You will contribute to a crucial aspect of the Department's strategic objective to provide an exceptional student experience. The Department is also seeking to expand its pool of academic and professionally qualified staff to help the College deliver high quality teaching and learning. Opportunities exist to teach on a range of Engineering and Computing courses and the Department is seeking well qualified professionals with relevant industrial experience and specialist subject knowledge.

The College welcomes applications from individuals at any of stage of their careers who consider that they have the potential to play a significant or leading role in the future development of our Engineering and Computing provision.

### Lecturer in Engineering (2 posts)

Ref: ENG001 £23,532 - £33,566 per annum  
Permanent, full time, 37 hours per week

### Lecturer in Computing

Ref: ENG002 £23,532 - £33,566 per annum  
Permanent, full time, 37 hours per week

Flexible hourly paid opportunities are also available.

### Lecturers in Engineering

Ref: ENG003 (£12.10 - £27.15 per hour)

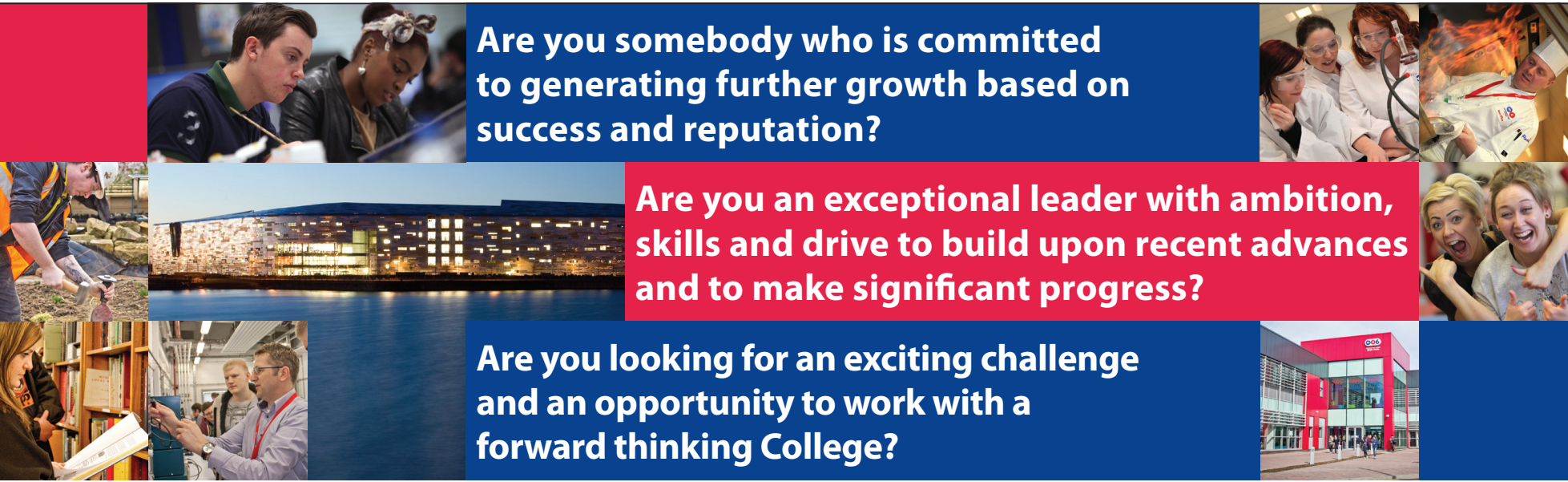
### Instructor/Demonstrators in Engineering

Ref: ENG004 (£18.86 per hour)

For an informal discussion about these exciting opportunities, please contact Paddy Oakes on (01642) 333844. For an Information Pack including an Online Application Form please visit the College Website [www.mbro.ac.uk](http://www.mbro.ac.uk) or please contact (01642) 333554, or e-mail [recruitment@mbro.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@mbro.ac.uk) Closing date 14 December 2012.

All appointments are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and receipt of two satisfactory references. Middlesbrough College is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.





**Are you somebody who is committed to generating further growth based on success and reputation?**

**Are you an exceptional leader with ambition, skills and drive to build upon recent advances and to make significant progress?**

**Are you looking for an exciting challenge and an opportunity to work with a forward thinking College?**

# DRIVING AMBITION INSPIRING SUCCESS

Middlesbrough College engages with over 12,000 students each year in the widest range of subject areas and as such is the largest provider of Further Education in the Tees Valley. Middlesbrough College is a thriving and buoyant institution – recruiting record numbers of full-time students, achieving consistently strong examination results and gaining its reputation and profile as a major 'player' in the Tees Valley and beyond, raising standards and economic prospects across the region. Middlesbrough College is ambitious for its community and place inclusion and excellence at the heart of its core values. The College moved to its 'state of the art' building in 2008 and has just opened a £7 million Sixth Form Centre (MC6) in 2012 and invests over £1.5 million every year in capital resources. This record of achievement is delivered by the College's most prized asset, its staff.



Middlesbrough College is looking to recruit 2 exceptional Directors to join its strong College Leadership Team to further drive forward its Mission Statement of "Driving Ambition and Inspiring Success".

## Director of A Levels (MC6)

REF: DIR1 (Salary £41,028 - £48,259) Permanent, full time, 37 hours per week

As the Director of AS/A Level provision, this is a wonderful opportunity to join an energetic and successful team. The College is looking for a person committed to generating further growth based on success and reputation. The Department has grown significantly this year, has moved into a custom built £7m Sixth Form Centre and continues to raise the standards with superb results this year including a 100% A level Pass Rate alongside outstanding value added. There is still more to be done and that's where you come in. The College wants to further grow its student numbers, improve its high grades, grow its range of offer, and achieve excellence and inclusion. The successful candidate will also have a fantastic opportunity for personal growth and professional development.

Interview dates are scheduled for the 14 & 15 January 2013.

## Director of Business Management and Professional Development

REF: DIR2 (Salary £41,028 - £48,259) Permanent, full time, 37 hours per week

This is a great opportunity for developing a thriving and buoyant Department. The opportunity exists to grow across all areas, both on full-time 16-18 years olds and 19+ full and part-time. The College is likely to make a significant capital contribution to support its ambitious plans for this area. This investment reflects its ambition and determination to give students in Middlesbrough and the wider Tees Valley the very best in high quality education. Middlesbrough College is therefore looking for an exceptional leader with ambition, skills and drive to build upon recent advances and to make significant progress. If you see high quality education and training as a moral imperative, then the College would really like to hear from you.

For an Informal discussion on these posts, please contact Mike Hopkins, Principal / Chief Executive on (01642) 333650.

For an Information Pack including an Online Application Form please visit the College Website [www.mbro.ac.uk](http://www.mbro.ac.uk) or please contact (01642) 333554, or e-mail [recruitment@mbro.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@mbro.ac.uk)

Closing date Monday 10 December 2012.

All appointments are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and receipt of two satisfactory references.

Middlesbrough College is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.



## Shaping futures

[huntingdon.ac.uk](http://huntingdon.ac.uk)

**Lecturer/Course Leader: Electrical Installation**

**Lecturer/Course Leader: Carpentry**

**Lecturer/Course Leader: Heating & Ventilation/Plumbing**

**Lecturer/Course Leader: Multi-Skills**

**Are you an outstanding lecturer/course leader?**

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**Do you want to be part of an ambitious and developing department?**

If so, we offer competitive salaries, pension, healthcare benefits, generous holiday and the benefit of working within a collaborative community.

**Competitive rates with benefits are available to candidates who meet our high standards.**

Closing date for applications: 13 December 2012.

For further information on the above vacancy and for an application form, please visit [www.huntingdon.ac.uk](http://www.huntingdon.ac.uk)

We welcome applications from all members of the community on an equal basis. All successful applicants will undertake a Disclosure CRB Check and evidence of proof to work in the UK will be required.

California Road, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 1BL



Learn, Succeed and be Outstanding Together



**Employability Skills Coordinator – Ref: G336**  
Full Time

Fixed Term until July 2013

£23,898.00 per annum

Closing date: 3rd December 2012

**Casual Learning Tutor - Beauty Therapy – Ref: G334**

Casual hours

£12.42 per hour

Closing date: 3rd December 2012

**Casual Learning Tutor – Professional Cookery – Ref: G279**

Casual hours

£12.42 - £15.68 per hour

Closing date: 7th December 2012

Interview date: 13th December 2012.

Download an application form at:  
[www.latestvacancies.com/grimsby](http://www.latestvacancies.com/grimsby)



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FE Week Sudoku challenge

	2	7	8			1		
		1			3		4	9
3			9		5		6	
4		8		5			3	
	9		6		8		2	
	5			9		4		1
	4		2		1			8
8	3		5			2		
		6			9	3	7	

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

4		5				2		7
		9				3		
			8	3	4			
	2		6		8		7	
6								9
	5		9		1		4	
			3	8	7			
		3				9		
5		4				7		6

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

Last Week's solutions

4	2	5	7	9	8	6	3	1
3	7	9	6	2	1	4	5	8
8	1	6	5	4	3	9	2	7
9	5	2	8	6	4	7	1	3
1	4	8	2	3	7	5	9	6
7	6	3	9	1	5	2	8	4
6	8	4	1	5	9	3	7	2
2	9	7	3	8	6	1	4	5
5	3	1	4	7	2	8	6	9

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

9	2	7	8	1	6	4	5	3
5	4	6	7	9	3	8	2	1
3	8	1	4	5	2	9	6	7
4	7	2	5	6	9	3	1	8
6	9	5	1	3	8	2	7	4
1	3	8	2	4	7	6	9	5
8	6	3	9	7	1	5	4	2
7	5	9	3	2	4	1	8	6
2	1	4	6	8	5	7	3	9

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of FE Week's biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I've been looking for the biggest puddles"

You can also follow our FE Week mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford